

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 70 (2004)
Heft: [6]

Artikel: Battles of the mind - contributed by a Swiss Society member
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-945166>

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BATTLES of the MIND

- contributed by a Swiss Society member.

I fully sympathise - or should I say, commiserise - with Paul (Helvetia June 04 page 2). My own moods and broodiness are dating back to October 2002 caused by the letter of NZ International Services, wherewith this Government Department is claiming parts of my personal savings from my country of birth, which were destined to top up my NZ Universal Superannuation. This Government office was referring to the law from 1964 - Clauses 69 & 70 - which declares, that pensioners born overseas will have their pensions from the birth country, including War Veteran Pensions, subtracted from the NZ Pension.

These letters with demands for handing over parts of their lifelong tended savings, have caused a lot of upheaval to the "oldies" and their families.

This law of 1964 was controversial

right from the start. At that time, the NZ Government had the opportunity to choose a pension scheme that had been applied in other Western countries, and is still running successfully, but they introduced the present universal system. Revisions to this system were long overdue. One of the NZ Ministers wrote that consecutive Governments in NZ had completely neglected to introduce a proper and just system.

In 1999, a group in the new Labour Government started to rewrite, change and add some of the clauses of the 1964 law, which they used to prop up Clauses 69 & 70 referring to the subtracting of the pensioners' personal savings.

All preparations for the launching of the revised or enforced scheme were done in utmost secrecy, and the training of the employees - which was how to deal

with the hesitant pensioners - started in August 2002, just after the Labour elections in July 2002.

In the meantime, this group in the Beehive is relishing the success of their scheme, which was and still is: to harvest the monies from savings schemes in foreign countries, belonging to the pensioners, without having to lift one finger to produce it (they refused to introduce schemes like these foreign countries have into NZ).

But now today - there is light at the end of the tunnel. Please do not suffer "in silence".

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please send your name, address and phone number to Marianne Drummond who will forward it on to our contributor, who will in turn contact you. He/she would love to hear from you.

50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

John and Bertha Kuriger were married on 15 May 1954 by Rev Fr Loui Leuthart at St Joseph's Hawera and celebrated their golden wedding anniversary at Mass at St Joseph's with their family and friends on 15 May 2004. The following day they celebrated at the Manaia Golf Club, with 100 of their family and friends enjoying a luncheon and refreshments. Then they cut the wedding cake, which was identical to the cake they had 50 years ago and was a surprise gift from one of their daughters.

Their Swiss friends, Marianne Drummond, Lisette Benkert and Silvia Schuler entertained, with Marianne on the accordion and Lisette and Silvia harmonising two very appropriate songs - Kamarade and Uf de Alpa Oba.



After 50 years they can look back at the happy years they spent dairy farming with their family and now have enjoyed the past 20 years retired. They never have much spare time as they've been blessed with five children, one son and four daughters, who are all married and have given them sixteen grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. However they still manage to play some golf between family visits and enjoy their Taranaki Swiss Club functions and travels.

Although they were both born in NZ, they are still very interested in their Swiss ancestry, as both their fathers came from Einsiedeln, and they have been very fortunate to have had four wonderful holidays in Switzerland.

Contributed by the Kuriger family.